SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE MINISTER

Mr. T. K. Nayar:

Mr. President, Sir,

I have great pleasure in availing myself of this occasion to briefly review the administration of the subjects entrusted to my care during the current year, and explain to the House the main features of the budget for the coming year so far as they relate to these departments.

As the House is well aware, since the outbreak of war, with the exception of the first two years, Cochin has been passing through extremely difficult times, bristling with problems peculiar to war-time conditions and demanding the maximum united effort on the part of Government and people for their solution. Tiding over one difficult year, with deepening disappointment, we have often found ourselves confronted with yet another, equally, if not more difficult; and though called upon to face more and more puzzling problems, the familiarity we have gained with them by their repeated continuance, has enabled us to devise more efficient modes of tackling them, and if the House would agree with me in thinking that as years go by we are progressively getting more successful in maintaining public welfare amidst these untold difficulties, it will certainly be a matter of relief and gratification for the present and a source of encouragement for the future.

FOOD PRODUCTION

"Food, more food and still more food" has been, in recent times, the inevitable watchword giving rise to anxious moments and painful perplexities to all Governments in deficit provinces and states in India, and Cochin in particular, which along with Travancore and Bengal, has engaged the attention of not only the Central Legislature and the rest of India but even of the British Parliament. I had occasion to mention in my last budget speech that I could think of no better way of discharging the solemn trust placed in me than by tuning my departmeints to the solution of the all-important problem of Food and augmenting the facilities for the production of more and more food stuffs in the State. I am glad to inform the House that thi policy has been continued with unabated vigour during the current year.

Minor Irrigation.—The minor irrigation scheme which was started in 1118 withsan allotment of Rs. 1,70,000 was continued during the current year with a further allotment of Rs. 1,80,000. This has resulted in the completion of about 200 items of minor irrigaton works which have facilitated the bringing into cultivation of sew areas and converting of siinglecrop land sinto double-crop ones. A further sum of Rs. 1,75,000 has been ear-marked for the furtherance of the same programme in 1120.

Seeds.—Scarcity of seeds, manure, implements and cattle, has been attempted to be solved for the efficient progress of the food production scheme. 1,500 parasof paddy seeds were aissued to the ryots from the Government Central Farm for kole and virippu cultivation and further quantity of 1,000 paras is set apart for mundakan crops. A sum of Rs. 5,345 has been distributed to the ryots as loan for the purchase of seeds and tapioca sets. Over 1,700 packets of available seeds and 20,000 seedlings of vegetable were issued from the Central Farm. The number of grafts made available for sale from the Central Farm has also been raised to 5,000 annually.

Manure.—Increased facilities to encourage intensive cultivation by the use of manure in larger quantities have been made during the year. With the 23 manure depots which have been opend in addition to those established last year, it can now be said that all Panchayats excepting two—where too arrangements have been made to open depots without delay—have been provided with manure depots. Manure from these depots are given on credit and the ryots have to repay the cost only after harvesting the crops. Government have also offered a subsidy of 25 per cent in the value of these manures. Manure to the value of Rs. 1,49,000 has been already purchased and most of this has been distributed. Arrangements are being made for the purchase of more.

Implements.—Great difficulty has been experienced by the ryots in securing implements. Iron and steel have become scarce and the prices of these articles have risen abnormally. To overcome this difficulty, arrangements have been made with the Government of India for the supply of iron and steel, and orders have placed for the supply of 600 tons of iron and steel, at controlled rates. It is the intention of Government to distribute this iron and steel among the ryots either as implements or as rawmaterial at controlled rates. Arrangements are also made to get down a number of spraying machines and a small number of oil engines and pumps.

Cattle.—The problem of cattle-farming has become more important compared to previous years, since the ban placed by the Madras Government on the export of cattle from Madras

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Presidency has deprived the State of nearly 20,000 heads of cattle per year. Although subsequent negotiations with the Madras Government have resulted in the granting of 600 cattle to the State, the cattle problem still cotinues to be difficult. Steps have been taken to conserve the existing cattle and increase cattle-farming by preventing indiscriminate slaughter of cattle, making liberal grants for the maintenance of stud bulls and purchase of a number of young bulls by the Government Central Farm for distribution to the public. The idea is to have at least one stud bull in each Panchayat area. A scheme for the wholesale improvement of cattle within a period of 20 to 25 years is also under consideration of Government.

Vegetable Cultivation.—In order to meet the shortage of vegetables in the State and to grow such varieties of vegetables which are now being imported from outside, like potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes, etc., Government have taken up a scheme for vegetable cultivation in the Nelliampathis. An area of 500 acres of forest land has been set apart for cultivation and arrangements have been made to plant 100 acres with fruit trees like oranges, plums, pears, plantains, pineapples and mango trees. The remaining 400 acres will be put under potatoes and vegetable cultivation early in 1120. The capital expenditure for the scheme for 1119 and 1120 is estimated at Rs. 1,39,500. The advance on this account is expected to be realised by the sale of vegetables. When the fruit trees begin to bear there will be a reasonable return of the capital.

Hill Paddy Cultivation —It was decided to lease out the lands cleared for the purpose of Hill Paddy Cultivation to the public for cultivation of food crops at nominal rates of rent. The Hill Paddy Cultivation scheme as a Government enterprise was, therefore, stopped. Large areas of lands were leased out to the public during the current year. Applications are being received for leasing out the remaining portions. This revised scheme whereby the difficult portion of the work of clearing the hills was done by Government and the land was leased out on easy terms, has already enhanced private initiative to take to Hill Paddy cultivation, and it is hoped that ere long the whole area ear-marked for the purpose will be brought under private cultivation.

Goat-farming.—An experimental Goat Farm is arranged to be opened in the Central Farm at Ollukkara. 50 she-goats of the best milking qualities from various places in this State will be selected. A few he and she goats of the Jamne Pari and Barbari breed are being got down and it is proposed to get a mixed breed by the crossing of the local varieties with the improved breeds imported.

Dairy Farm.—Steps have been taken to improve the Dairy of the Central Farm and enlarge its activities. The Dairy was strengthened in 1118 by a small addition of cows and although attempts for further strengthening it were made, difficulties of getting the required transport permit delayed action in this direction. It is hoped that sufficient number for the purposes of strengthening the Dairy Farm will soon be purchased.

Demonstration and Publicity.—Since publicity and demonstration on the methods of cultivation and the scientific use of manures form an important aspect of the grow-more-food compaign, as many as 73 demonstration centres were opened in the State, besides the special demonstration conducted at the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition and Cattle-show held at Cherpu under the auspices of the National War Front. A Special Officer for Manure has also been appointed to facilitate the distribution and demonstration of manures and to educate the public on their proper use. Publicity is also being given regarding the scientific use of manures by the National War Front.

INDUSTRIES

Industrial Centre—Cottage Industries.—In the last budget it was proposed to organise various cottage industries in the Rural Industrial Centre at Cherpu. For this purpose, the office of the Assistant Director of Industries was shifted to this Centre, and he was put in charge of the work of organising and developing cottage industries through this Centre. During this year, the Centre, besides establishing and running cottage industries departmentally, has also organised artisans and rural workers in Co-operative Societies under the immediate supervision of Government. Manufacture of photo frames, lace garlands and caps, tooth powder, slate and slate pencils, dyeing, weaving and manufacture of shirting and clothing and other design works and oil pressing, are some of the industries pursued in this Centre.

Organisation of artisans.—The Centre is also organising co-operative societies of artisans. They are given accommodation in the Centre and are made to work under departmental supervision. Financial assistance in the shape of loan and organisation assistance in the shape of paid secretaries are also extended to them. The carpenters' society, the leather workers' society and the weavers' society are now functioning in the Centre successfully. Experiments and research in cottage industries are also being carried out.

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